



23 NOV 2009

MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS POLICY

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Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion
Chair
Senate Select Committee on Regional and
Remote Indigenous Communities
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Senator

Thank you for your letter dated 23 October 2009 inviting the Northern Territory Government to respond to issues raised in the Senate Select Committee's Second Report and related to service delivery in Indigenous communities.

Attached, please find the following for the Committee's consideration:

- Attachment A – Northern Territory Government's Response to the Request for Information arising from the Senate Select Committee on Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities' Second Report (June 2009); and
- Attachment B – Item 1: Map of Safe Places in the Northern Territory; and
- Attachment C – Item 2 (b): Organisations funded by the Northern Territory Government and providing Youth Services.

In partnership with the Australian Government, The Northern Territory Government continues to actively work towards closing the gap of Indigenous disadvantage.

Should you require further information in relation to the Northern Territory Government's response to the issues raised by the Committee, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Ken Davies, Deputy Chief Executive, Department of the Chief Minister, on telephone 08 8999 5178.

Yours sincerely

MALARNDIRRI MCCARTHY

Attachment A

Northern Territory Government's Response to a Request for Information arising from the Senate Select Committee on Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities' Second Report (June 2009)

Item 1 (page 86, paragraph 4.90; page 89, paragraph 4.97)

The Committee undertook in its last report to monitor the operation of safe houses in the Northern Territory and to report on this issue in the next report. Furthermore, the Committee was also in agreement with the NTER Review's recommendation that where safe houses have been installed, the Northern Territory Government, the relevant service provider and each community should agree about their management, duty of care, liability and integration with associated services before they become operational, and as further safe houses are installed there be consultations with the relevant community on these issues. The Committee undertook to monitor whether the construction of safe houses is following procedures.

Response required by the Committee

Please provide the Committee with any relevant information on whether the NT Government's role in the operation of safe houses, and whether the recommendation of the NTER Review has been followed in the construction of safe houses, and whether procedures are in place to ensure that it is followed in the future.

Response provided by the Northern Territory Government

To date, 19 remote Safe Places (Houses) have been opened and are staffed by local people employed by the Department of Health and Families at an AO3 level. Remote staff are supported by a team of Safe Place Project Officers based in Darwin. This team regularly travels to communities to provide face to face support. Pre-employment training has been provided to staff and a mentoring program is being planned to provide additional support for staff.

The Implementation Plan that sits under Schedule H of the *National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory* is in the process of being finalised.

The degree of integration of each Safe Place varies between communities. Integration is however a key focus of the Northern Territory Government's Safe Place team in terms of appropriately and effectively engaging with key stakeholders at a local level.

An agreement has been reached to develop a high level Memorandum of Understanding between Safe Places, Night Patrol and Police, which can be adapted to each community's specific circumstances.

Item 2 (page 91, paragraph 4.108; page 92, Para 4.122)

The Committee agrees with the NTER Review's recommendation that a comprehensive strategy needs to be developed and implemented for youth development services to address both capital infrastructure and recurrent funding, linked to a wider community development framework. The Committee notes that this recommendation was accepted by the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments.

Response required by the Committee

- a) Please provide the Committee with an update on how this recommendation is being implemented.
- b) The Committee would also appreciate any information on the success or otherwise of youth program funding in the Northern Territory. The Committee regards youth services as essential for community wellbeing and wishes to be informed of any progress made in this area.

Response provided by the Northern Territory Government

In relation to Item a) above, the Australian Government has finalised an overarching strategic framework and comprehensive program guidelines for the *Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory Youth in Communities* funding measure, and continues to retain responsibility for managing the roll-out of this program. Milestones achieved to date include:

- \$8.795 million have been allocated to fund youth projects under the *Youth in Communities* measure for 2009-10.
- Four continuation projects have been approved for funding, to a total value of \$3.706 million.
- These projects will be funded over three years, and are likely to result in employment and training opportunities for approximately 44 youth workers across eight Remote Service Delivery townships, one Territory Growth township, and a number of other priority communities. Funding negotiations are currently in progress, with the projects expected to commence implementation between mid- and late November 2009.
- Work has also commenced on undertaking a survey of the Northern Territory Remote Service Delivery and Growth townships with Indigenous youth population numbers above the NT average. The survey will rank these communities for eligibility to receive funding for new projects under the *Youth in Communities* measure. This survey is expected to be completed by the first week of December 2009.

The time-table for new youth projects funding is progressing according to schedule, with the call for applications expected to be made in early December 2009 and projects to commence by late January 2010.

In relation to Item b) above, Youth development programs are managed through the Northern Territory Government's Office of Youth Affairs. *Building a Better Future for Young Territorians Progress Report 2008-2009* provides an update on all Northern Territory Government initiatives and programs currently being implemented and the progress made against the policy framework's five key directions:

1. Improve young people's health and wellbeing.
2. Improve access to education and employment for young people.
3. Provide more opportunities for young people to have fun and develop new skills.
4. Make sure that young people are able to participate in decisions that affect their lives.
5. Create communities where young people can feel safe and secure.

A link to the Progress Report is provided below:

http://www.nt.gov.au/health/youth_affairs/pdf/FINAL%20Building%20a%20Better%20Future%20for%20Young%20Territorians%20Progress%20Report%202008-09.pdf

Three grant rounds are held each year to provide funds for drug and alcohol free entertainment and/or youth development and leadership activities. In 2008-09, a total of \$136,400 was awarded to various groups, individuals and organisations, who organised over 100 activities for young people across the Territory. Example of these activities include: fire twirling, skydiving, Puppy Love workshops at the RSPCA, Hip Hop dancing, bicycle maintenance workshops, leadership camps, expos and United Nations Youth Conferences.

The Northern Territory Office of Youth Affairs plans, coordinates, promotes and evaluates National Youth Week (NYW) activities in the Territory each year. In 2009, over 90 sporting, recreational, cultural and developmental activities were held across the Territory as part of NYW.

The Youth Minister's Round Table of Young Territorians is a gathering of 16 young people aged between 15 and 25, which allows for direct communication between young Territorians and the Northern Territory Government. The Round Table meets four times a year to work on community-based projects, attend training and skills development workshops and meet with Ministers and Executive staff in the Northern Territory Government.

Item 3 (page 94, paragraph 4.115)

The NTER provided funding for an additional 200 teachers, with a commitment of \$98.8 million over 5 years to achieve this.

Response required by the Committee

Please provide the Committee with an update on implementation of this measure and current teacher numbers.

Response provided by the Northern Territory Government

The 200 teachers funded through the NTER were to be allocated as follows:

- 170 teachers employed by the Department of Education and Training (DET); and
- 30 teachers employed through non-government schools (NGS).

The funding has been spread over four years, with a total of 50 teachers per annum being deployed from 1 July 2008 onwards. This includes 42.5 teacher positions through DET and 7.5 through NGS.

As of August 2009, the implementation of this measure had reached the following milestones:

- 85 teachers were deployed by DET; and
- 12 teachers were deployed by the Catholic Education Office.

Item 4 (page 95 – 96, paragraph 4.128)

The school nutrition program, which provides breakfast and lunch, is designed to increase attendance at schools. According to the Commonwealth Government, the rationale was drawn from the Little Children are Sacred report which recommended that a school nutrition program be established.

Response required by the Committee

Please provide updated figures on the number of schools that are in the prescribed areas are currently with or without a nutrition program and any other relevant information regarding this measure.

Response provided by the Northern Territory Government

There are currently 64 schools participating in the School Nutrition Program (SNP) in the Northern Territory. Local community members who work on the SNP receive support and training provided by the Department of Health and Families, the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, NT Red Cross and other training providers.

The School Nutrition Program currently operates in the following communities. Please note that in some cases, one school may be shared by multiple communities, hence the difference in the number of schools (64) and the number of communities (66).

- | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------------|
| 1. Ali Curung | 6. Atitjere | 11. Bulman |
| 2. Alpurrurulam | 7. Barunga | 12. Canteen creek |
| 3. Amoonguna | 8. Belyuen | 13. Elliott |
| 4. Angurugu | 9. Beswick | 14. Engawala |
| 5. Areyonga | 10. Binjari | 15. Finke |

16. Galiwinku	33. Milikapiti	50. Pirlangimpi
17. Gapuwiyak	34. Milingimbi	51. Ramingining
18. Gunbalanya	35. Milyakburra	52. Robinson River
19. Gunyangara	36. Minjilang	53. Santa Teresa
20. Haasts Bluff	37. Minyerri	54. Tara (Neutral Junction)
21. Hermannsburg	38. Mt Liebig	55. Titjikala
22. Imangara	39. Mutitjulu	56. Umbakumba
23. Imanpa	40. Nauiyu	57. Wadeye
24. Jilkminggan	41. Nguiu	58. Wallace Rockhole
25. Kalkarindji	42. Ngukurr	59. Warruwi
26. Kaltukatjara	43. Nturiya	60. Willowra
27. Kintore	44. Numbulwar	61. Wilora
28. Kybrook Farm	45. Nyirripi	62. Wutunugurra
29. Lajamanu	46. Palumpa	63. Yarralin
30. Laramba	47. Papunya	64. Yirrkala
31. Maningrida	48. Peppimenarti	65. Yuelamu
32. Manyallaluk	49. Pigeon Hole	66. Yuendumu

Item 5 (page 149, paragraph 5.56)

The *Working Future* policy outlines the Northern Territory Government's intention to reduce red tape through the employment of a Northern Territory Coordinator General for remote service delivery. The Committee notes that this is a similar position to the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) Coordinator General. The policy also promises to improve funding arrangements and acknowledges that the provision of funds on an annual basis makes planning difficult. It undertakes to 'put in place a new way of allocating funding that is fair and that provides certainty for communities'. The Committee welcomed the announcement and undertook to monitor and report on any funding changes and the effects the changes may have on service delivery.

Response required by the Committee

Please provide the community with any relevant information on the operations of the Northern Territory Coordinator General and the effectiveness of the role in improving remote service to date. Please provide the Committee with information on any changes to funding arrangements that have been made and what effects the NT Government considers these have had on service delivery.

Response provided by the Northern Territory Government

The Northern Territory Coordinator General is expected to provide his first six-monthly report by the end of November 2009. However, the Coordinator General is already in a position to advise that, in his view, funding to service providers, Shires and non-government organisations should be significantly streamlined. The Coordinator General further advises that his preference is for funding cycles of at least three to five years. This would enable service providers to have more certainty

for staff recruitment and retention and provide improved stability of services to constituents in remote towns.

Additionally, the Coordinator General is of the view that all funding should be linked to Shire statutory obligations under the *Local Government Act*. In other words, funding should be acquitted through the *Act's* financial and performance acquittal process rather than through arbitrary timelines set by agencies. The Coordinator General further intends to recommend that there be a clearer method of identifying funding to Remote Service Delivery and Growth Towns in Government budget processes.

Item 6 (page 150, paragraph 5.65)

The Committee's second report included concerns about the funding of homelands and outstations following changes to Territory and Commonwealth policy. The Committee notes that the Memorandum of Understanding between the Territory and Commonwealth Governments on Indigenous Housing, Accommodation and Related services did not include 'any requirement that any of this money previously earmarked for outstations need be spent on outstations'.

Response required by the Committee

Please provide the Committee an update on the Northern Territory Government's funding of homelands and outstations, with particular attention to any changes in the last six months.

Response provided by the Northern Territory Government

The Northern Territory Government took over responsibility for homelands and outstations from the Australian Government on 1 July 2008. The funding amount for municipal and essential services provision to homelands and outstations is \$20m per annum, as transferred by the Commonwealth to the Northern Territory Government. In addition to this amount, the Northern Territory Government allocates \$8m per annum for housing repairs and maintenance. The Australian Government also provides \$5.5m to the Northern Territory Government for the conversion of Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) to municipal and essential services positions.

Through the *Working Future* policy, the Northern Territory Government has publicly stated that it values the contribution of homelands and outstations to the economic, social and cultural life of the Territory. The Government's headline policy, released in May 2009, establishes the following:

- Government will continue to provide municipal, essential and housing repairs and maintenance services to existing homelands and outstations that are occupied at least eight months of the year.
- Through in-depth consultations, Government will clarify residents' expectations of support and service delivery.

- Government will improve the transparency of service delivery arrangements and introduce a new disbursement model for the allocation of resources.

The Northern Territory Government is currently conducting the Stage 4 of the homelands and outstations consultations with residents and service providers. These consultations are expected to be completed by 15 December 2009 and will enable the Government to:

- a) formulate a new funding allocation model to be in place as at 1 July 2010 based on a combination of estimated costs of service delivery, planned investments, residents' needs and available resources; and
- b) establish the extent of any potential gaps in funding for services and support to homelands and outstations.

Item 7 (page 157, paragraph 5.89)

Student / Teacher ratios and ESL services to remote Indigenous schools.

Response required by the Committee

Please provide the Committee with the most recent information on student / teacher ratios in remote schools in the Northern Territory and whether there have been any changes to the ratio for remote schools and areas with high ESL requirements.

Response provided by the Northern Territory Government

Teacher / student ratios used for teacher allocation purposes in Northern Territory Government schools are as follows:

- Preschool: one teacher for twenty students (1 / 20);
- Primary school: 1 / 22;
- Middle school: 1 / 17; and
- Senior school: 1 / 14.

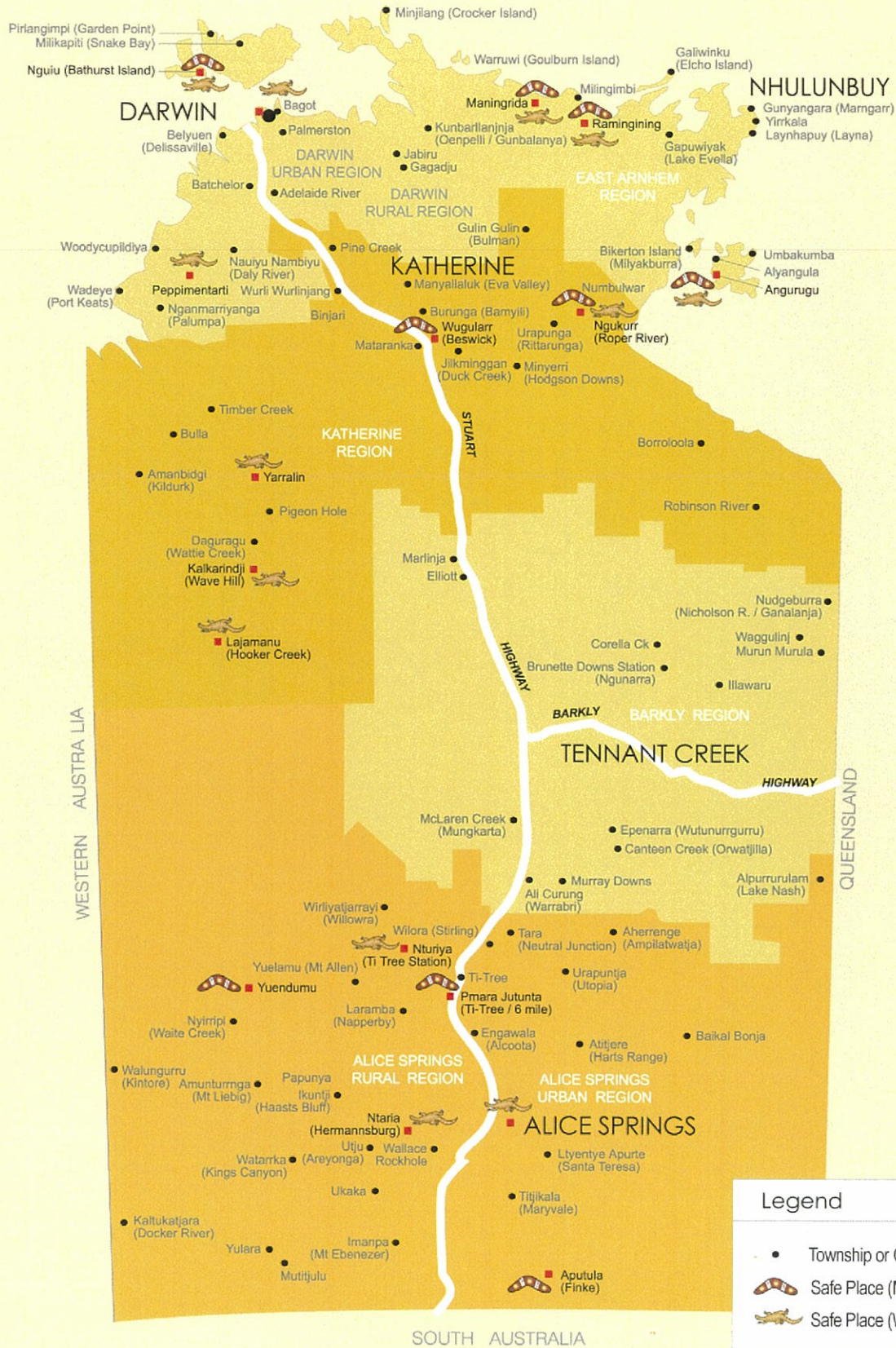
As of October 2009, there were 21 general classroom teacher vacancies in remote schools, of which eight were due to resignations. The recruitment process is currently in progress for all these 21 positions.

Although no changes have been made to teacher/student ratios used for allocation purposes to date, the priority with the deployment of additional teachers above formula allocations (such as those provided through the '200 teachers' initiative) has been to increase teacher numbers in the early years in remote and regional primary schools in order to achieve improved English language literacy outcomes.

With regard to specialist ESL teachers, it should be noted that the data is more complex due to varying staff allocation methodologies (these are currently under review as part of the broader staff allocation methodology). As of October 2009, a total of 63.6 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) ESL teaching positions were allocated across all remote schools. This figure includes senior teachers who work across a number of smaller schools.

Attachment B – Item 1

Safe Places in Aboriginal Communities



Attachment C

Item 2 (b): Organisations funded by the Northern Territory Government and providing Youth Services

ORGANISATION	SERVICE
WEST ARNHEM SHIRE COUNCIL	GUNBALANYA YOUTH AND WELLBEING PROGRAM
ANGLICARE NT	YOUTH DROP IN & ACTIVITY ZONE (YDIAZ)
ANGLICARE NT	HEALTH CONNECTIONS FOR YOUTH
AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY- NORTHERN TERRITORY DIVISION	THE SHAK - SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAM
AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY- NORTHERN TERRITORY DIVISION	E-CRUZ YOUTH RECREATION
BRAHMINY GROUP PTY LTD	BRAHMINY FOUNDATION YOUTH CAMP PROGRAM 01/7/2009 - 30/06/2011
CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL CONGRESS INCORPORATED	AFTER HOURS YOUTH DROP IN CENTRE
GAP YOUTH CENTRE ABORIGINAL CORPORATION	GYC MANAGEMENT
HUMAN SERVICES TRAINING ADVISORY COUNCIL INC.	COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE NT YOUTH AFFAIRS NETWORK (NTYAN)
MISSION AUSTRALIA	KATHERINE YOUTH BEAT
MISSION AUSTRALIA	ZERO TO TEN SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAM
MISSION AUSTRALIA	DARWIN AND PALMERSTON YOUTH BEAT
MISSION AUSTRALIA	DARWIN AND PALMERSTON YOUTH BEAT
MISSION AUSTRALIA	YOUTH BEAT DARWIN AND PALMERSTON
MT THEO-YUENDUMU SUBSTANCE MISUSE ABORIGINAL CORPORATION	WILLOWRA COMMUNITY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
TANGENTYERE COUNCIL INCORPORATED	ALICE SPRINGS CIRCUIT BREAKER YOUTH CAMP PROGRAM
TANGENTYERE COUNCIL INCORPORATED	AFTER HOURS YOUTH RECREATION
YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION INC. (DU)	THE SISTERS PROJECT
ALICE SPRINGS YOUTH ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES INC.	CRISIS ACCOMMODATION

ORGANISATION	SERVICE
YOUNG MENS CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION KATHERINE INC	YMCA KATHRINE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT UNIT PROGRAM
YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION INC. (DU)	THE NORTHERN TERRITORY POLICE YOUTH DIVERSION SCHEME
ANGLICARE NT	THE DEPOT (DHCS STABILISATION, ASSESSMENT AND TRANSITIONAL (SAT) PROGRAM
ANGLICARE NT	CHILD YOUTH RESIDENTIAL SUPPORT SERVICE (CYRSS)
CREATE FOUNDATION NT	CREATE NT
ALICE SPRINGS YOUTH ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES INC.	YOUTH HOUSING AND ADVOCACY PROGRAM
ALICE SPRINGS YOUTH ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES INC.	AMPE AKWEKE
YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION INC. (DU)	CASY HOUSE: INTENSIVE CASE MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVED LINKAGES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN CRISIS ACCOMODATION
ALICE SPRINGS YOUTH ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES INC.	CRISIS ACCOMMODATION
ALICE SPRINGS YOUTH ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES INC.	YOUTH HOUSING AND ADVOCACY PROGRAM
ALICE SPRINGS YOUTH ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES INC.	AMPE AKWEKE
ANGLICARE NT	ANGLICARE YOUTH HOUSING PROGRAM - PALMERSTON & RURAL
ANGLICARE NT	ANGLICARE YOUTH HOUSING PROGRAM - DARWIN
SOMERVILLE COMMUNITY SERVICES INC.	YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES - KATHERINE
YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION INC. (DU)	CASY HOUSE
YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION INC. (DU)	INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAMS